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The Fifteenth Century

By

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PREFACE

Celebrations in connection with the advent of the fifteenth century of Islamic Era were started well in advance, before its beginning on the Ist of Muharram 1401 A.H. (10 th November, 1980). Elaborate arrangements were started for celebrating the occasion in a befitting manner right from 1400 A. H., both within and outside the Islamic world. There were numerous political and other reasons including the impact of a variety of Islamic movements which had lent an importance to this change-over (which occurs after the turn of every century)as had never been accorded earlier to the beginning of a new century. In the Arab and non-Arab countries a series of conferences, meetings and seminars were planned under different pretexts, and even a secular country like India decided to celebrate the occasion as well as issue a commemorative postal stamp to mark the occasion. Several newspapers and journals published by the Muslims started preparations to bring out special issues in commemoration of the fifteenth century. I was also asked to participate in several of these conferences and to contribute to the special issues of these journals.

But, in spite of world-wide rejoicing on this occasion, I could not bring myself to join these celebrations. The present state of affairs in the world of Islam and certain tragic happenings had made me so dispirited that I found no urge to join others in the celebrations of the new century. I had, therefore, to express regret at not being able to comply with their requests. God had, however, willed it otherwise. The

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Students' Islamic Movement of India decided to organise a celebration week in the honour of the fifteenth century which was to begin with a meeting to be held on the 1st November, 1980 (22nd Dhil Hijja, 1400) in the Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall, Lucknow. They insisted on me to inaugurate the celebrations. I had to give in because of the great fervour and enthusiasm of these youngmen. I had intented to speak at the meeting for a few minutes only so as to draw their attention to certain important aspects of the matter and then go straight to the Railway station, for I had to take part in the Religious Education Conference at Etah on the same day. But the fire and passion of the audience, and more than that, perhaps, the will of God, made me forget all about the impending journey and my speech was prolonged. I would not have perhaps touched all those matters that I covered in my speech on that day, if I had sat down to write an article on the subject.

My speech was tape-recorded and reduced into writing. When it was produced before me, I edited and supplemented it with the exact quotations from the books I had mentioned from memory. A few points alluded to in the speech were also expanded and references were added for those who might be willing to go through the sources. The extempore speech thus took the shape of an article which contains a brief survey of the past and a message for the future. I thought it worthwhile to publish the article in the shape of a booklet so that it could be sent to those who still want me to express my views on the subject, for the fifteenth century celebrations are still continuing.

This article, which is basically the revised shape of a speech, should not be expected to mention every important personage and movement of Islamic history. Nor should it

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be considered an omission if certain persons do not find all such movements and personalities mentioned in it, for it is not a directory of the revivalist movements in Islam. It is only a rapid survey of the revivalist efforts of the last few centuries and should be taken as a message for self-introspection to find out the latent capabilities of each one of us.

The brochure is presented as a gift to the readers from the writer and the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications on this august occasion of the beginning of fifteenth century of Islamic era with the hope that it would be accepted with the same spirit of goodwill, overlooking the omissions and faults, if any, normally found in an off-hand speech. I am glad that Syed Mohiuddin has rendered it into English for the benefit of those who cannot go through the Urdu version.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama,
1st Muharram 1401/10th Nov.. 1980.

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THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Dawn of the fifteenth century of Hijra is rending the air now-a-days throughout the world. The Hijra calendar began with the migration of the holy Prophet. Normally every era is reckoned from the birth or death of any great personality or the victory gained or establishment of any kingdom.[1] But it is noteworthy that the religion of the Prophet was not named after him. The name of his religion speaks of his message. Islam is not the name of any person : it means a conscious decision to submit oneself to God. The same characteristic is to be found in the nomenclature of its calendar : it does not begin with the birth of any great personage, not even that of the last Prophet whom Muslims love and revere only next to God.

The calendar of Islam neither begins with the birth of the Prophet, nor with his death, but with his migration.

This means that whenever a new Islamic century begins, it brings a message for you. It does not remind you of any person or class of persons, but refreshes the memory of the great cause for which the Prophet had left his hearth and home

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1. The Christian or Gregorian calendar, for instance, begins with the birth of Jesus Christ, Bikrami calendar of India is named after Raja Vikramaditta and in the Zoroastrian Iran, two calendars were in vogue, one beginning from the Xeres' II ascending the throne and another from the date of his death. The Julian calendar was adopted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 to meet a demand for greater accuracy in the date of Easter.

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to settle down in a new city. It was undoubtedly a great cause–a great message–not meant for the safety of his own life or that of his companions. The step was taken to preserve and deliver the message of God to the whole of mankind. The advent of this century recalls to our mind that even the things held dearest by us can be given up for the sake of a great cause. The incident it conjures up to our mind was one of the most daring steps ever taken in the annals of the world. It also gives us hope and courage by pointing out the fact that whatever be the hardships and adverse circumstances and, howsoever great may be the opposition, if a cause is meant for the good of humanity and it is pursued with sincerity and resolute will, it is bound to live and thrive and ultimately succeed in achieving its end.

Thus, the fifteenth century of Islamic era is not a message of hope for Muslims alone; it has glad tiding for the entire mankind, especially for those who have anything to offer for the good of humanity and also want to strive for it.

Will this century prove a blessing for the Muslims and the humanity, at large, or will it be a calamity? This cannot be predicted at present. These are things that are determined by God. But there are also truths pointed out by the Quran which remain unchanged for ever. One of these truths is :

"That man hath only that for which he maketh effort".

(LIII : 39)

Man gets only that in his life of the world and in the hereafter for which he strives and makes an effort. Verily, he can lay a claim only to the effort made by him and the outcome of such an effort. God further says in the same context :

"And that his effort will be seen."

(LIII : 40)

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What God says is really a heartening message for the whole of mankind. It means that in every time and clime, the effort made by man will bear fruit. Anyone who strives for any cause will see the result of his effort.

"And afterward he will be repaid for it with fullest payment."

(LIII : 41)

The promise made for the outcome of human effort, as spoken of in the above verses, is really a message of hope for mankind. Iqbal has alluded to the same fact in one of his couplets in which he says :

Effort fashions the life, makes it heaven or hell ;
Man, by nature, is neither a saint nor a devil.

I would substitute the word 'Century' for man in this couplet. This also applies to the oncoming fifteenth century as well as to the centuries that are past : they were neither a blessing nor a curse. The virture or vice of a century depends on the effort made by man. We cannot foretell whether a century or a year or a month or even a day or a moment is auspicious or inauspicious. Islam does not admit of any such theory of luckiness or ill-fatedness of time as found in other nations which have been deprived of the guidance of the prophets of God. To say that the coming century would be propitious for the Muslim nation or that it will bring ill luck and dishonour to any other people is not the Islamic way of thought. There is nothing in the Scripture or the Traditions of the Prophet to support such predictions. Actually, the vary prognostication about time is highly injurious to human effort. If a man were to know beforehand that the approaching hour was inauspicious for him, he would cease to make any effort or he would rather become irresolute and idolent.

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The last Prophet of God had plucked up superstition and credulity by its root and branch. Once there was a sun eclipse during the life-time of the Prophet ; or, perhaps, it was willed by God for the guidance of Prophet's followers. The Prophet's son Ibrahim had died a short while ago.[1] This was the time when ignorance and superstition pervaded the entire world and its vestiges still lingered on in Arabia which had just emerged from the times of Ignorance. The bereavement suffered by the Prophet was highly emotional. Certain Muslims came out with the comment, "Why not, the sun has been affected by the bereavement of the Prophet." Any other religious leader or founder of a movement would have rather kept quiet instead of contradicting such an innocent remark. The Prophet had not been a party to the spreading of this rumour which actually went to increase his prestige and influence. The people had themselves thought of it and therefore it was not incumbent on him to disclaim the thought. But this is the difference between a prophet of God and a worldly leader of the people. The very things which are considered advantageous by the worldly-minded people and political leaders are treated as infidelity by the messengers of God. I do not know if anybody else has given such a good account of himself as the Prophet of Islam. Of course, we might come across similar examples of rectitude among the prophets but it would be difficult to find a similar example among political leaders. The holy Prophet addressed his followers, saying :

> "The sun and the moon are two of the signs of God. They do not undergo an eclipse on the life or death of human beings."[2]

1. Ibrahim died in 10 A. H. when he was one and a half years old.
1 *Kitab-ul-Kasuf, Sahih Muslim*, Vol. I, p. 296.

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The Prophet made it clear that the view expressed by certain persons was wrong. The sun and the moon are governed by another law which takes no notice of the death or any other happening connected with any man, howsoever great he may be If the Prophet had remained silent, nothing untoward would have happened. At the most it would have been taken as an spontaneous expression of love and affection or the result of over-credulousness of certain persons, but the Prophet of God could not condone the superstitious idea. He immediately rejected it as if declaring to posterity: "No, no ! My family and my progeny has nothing to do with it. The universe created by God is much more important than my family, and the Lord of the world is Independent of all creations. His Law is above everything else". This was the prophetic guidance meant for intellectual development of human race. There is no doubt that human intelligence is much more important than the human species. It is intellect of man that rules over the human race : human race cannot claim to have superiority over the intellect of man. The remark made amounted to waywardness of human intellect and therefore it was dangerous. It needed to be set right then and there.

I was telling you that no century can be branded as auspicious or inauspicious. Take the example of a tumbler. If it is empty, you cannot say that it is good or bad. Its goodness or badness depends on the thing contained by it. It is meant to contain water, but if it has wine it can be called a goblet. And if it contains poison, it would be a deadly container. The tumbler is in itself a harmless vessel and it depends on you what you fill in with. If you fill in the tumbler with Zamzam, it would be a receptacle of Zamzam, but if you want you can

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make it a container of alcohol. In the same way it depends on our efforts to make this century propitious or doomful for us.

I would like to cite three examples in this connexion. Two of the centuries I am going to mention here began in a very sombre and gloomy setting but we do not find the then historians and writers lamenting or grieving at its oncoming. Ibn Athir and Ibn Kathir have left their writings to show the reactions of the Islamic world at the beginning of the seventh century. Storm petrels, at that time, were clearly visible to predict that the oncoming century would be gloomy and sinister not only for the Muslims or the Islamic world but for the entire world at large. The century began with such a horrible incident that Ibn Athir (d. 638/1239) had to say :

> "If anyone were to claim that no such happening has come to pass sine the days of Adam to this day, he would not be incorrect, for the history does not record any incident even half so disastrous."[1]

I am referring here to the onslaught of Tartars in 616/1219 against the strongest Muslim Kingdom of Khwarizm Shah. The seventh century of the Islamic era and the thirteenth Christian century had just began when Tartars rose as a tempest and swept away the whole of the Islamic world. They pulled down entire cities in Turkistan and Iran and raised minaretes of human skulls to announce their victory. Flourishing cities were turned into graveyards. The horrific situation all over the world thus described by Edward Gibbon in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* would give you an idea of the reign of terror let loose by the Tartars. He writes :

"The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage

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1. Ibn Athir, *Al-Kamli*, Vol. II. pp. 147-48

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hostility; a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden; and the remote nations of the Baltic and Ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars, whom their fear and ignorance was inclined to separate from the human species."[1]

You know where is Sweden and how far away lies the coast of England from the area where Tartars had brought wrack and ruin. Their charge was so terrifying that the Swedish fishermen did not dare go out to the coasts of England for fishing for a long time. A historian of the medieval Europe could not describe the horrible situation save by saying that the sky fell on the ground to destroy everything.[2]

The two historians I have quoted here depict the feelings of those in the West who never came directly in contact with the Tartars. The reactions of the Muslims can best be estimated from an adage prevalent in those days which said :

"Believe everything but not that the Tartars have suffered a defeat."

Thus said the Muslims who had never known despondency and had never lost their heart. These were the people who had been told by God :

Despair not from the mercy of God.
(XXXIX : 53)

These Muslims had also read in the Quran that :

"Despair not of the spirit of Allah,
Lo ! none despaireth of the spirit of Allah
save disbelieving folk."
(XII : 87)

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1. Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. VII. p. 66
2. Herold Lamb, *Gingiz Khan*, p. 266

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Yet the depression and dejection of the Muslims had then reached the limit that the defeat of the Tartars in any encounter was regarded by them as an impossibility.

A mistake committed by Khwarizm Shah made the Tartars come out of their retreat where they had been secluded for hundreds of years. Their main target were Muslims as one can see from the pages of history. They fell upon Turkistan, Iran and Iraq and decimated all the centres of culture and learning. This was the reason why the intelligentsia of these areas migrated to India by tens of thousands. Arnold has tried to sketch the despondency of the then Muslims in the *Preaching of Islam*. Any sane person endowed with the capacity of reasoning could have predicted that Islam has had its day and the star of Muslims will never rise again. This calamity had befallen the Muslims for they were regarded as the chief enemies by the Tartars. They had thus little hope of retrieving their lost position. Arnold writes :

> "This was a task for the missionary energies of Islam that was rendered more difficult from the fact that there were two powerful competitors in the field. The spectacle of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emulously striving to win the allegiance of the fierce conquerors that had set their feet on the necks of adherents of these great missionary religions, is one that is without parallel in the history of the world....."[1]

'For Islam to enter into competition with such powerful rivals as Budhism and Christianity were at the outest of the period of the Mongol rule, must have

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1. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, p. 219.

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appeared a well-nigh hopeless undertaking."[1]

It appeared to all intents and purposes that Christianity would emerge successful in this contest. Tartars had not fought their battles against Christians and a number of Chingiz Khan's son had taken Christian wives. Christain clergymen had also secured entry in the courts of Mongol warlords. It thus appeared to be a foregone conclusion that the Mongols would ultimately embrace Christianity. But, do you know what happened finally? Let me quote Arnold again, who says:

> "But Islam was to rise again from the ashes of the former grandeur and through its preachers won over these savage conquerors to the acceptance of the faith."[2]
>
> " In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and the savage tribes that followed in their wake were at length brought to submit to the faith of the Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet'[3].

The century which began with the most inauspicious incident—if there is a world like inauspicious in dictionary of Islam—became a century of luminous victory while the world stared wide-eyed at the turn of events. Mongols, whose swords were still dyed with the blood of Muslims, became the followers of Islam. Such was the animosity of the Mongols against Muslims that Howarth writes in the history of the Mongols that:

"So notoriously brutal was the treatment they received

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1. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, p. 225.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 259
3. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

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that even the Chinese showmen in their exhibitions of shadow figures exultingly brought forward the figure of an old man with a white beared dragged by the neck at the tail of a horse, as showing how the Mongol horsemen behaved towards the Muslims."[1]

The fact is that the Muslims had then lost everything except their faith in God. They had not lost their trust and conviction in God, nor the inner strength of spirit The question is, who had suffered a defeat ? I would say—and with regret—that unworthy Muslim Kings had been put to rout and a sickly and weak Muslim society had been humbled. As for Islam, it remained where it was; it was never put out of court. The Muslims considered the Mongols as invincible because their swords had rusted or broken. Tartars had proved their valour by their superior military organisation. They had not fallen to a life of ease and comfort like the Muslims because of the excess of wealth. They were still fresh, had vigour and could undergo hardships like the early Arab conquerors who had, like the Tartars, came out of the desert to subdue the world. No power could face them merely with the munitions of war.

Then, who prevailed over the Tartars? Who won them over to Islam ?

Those who had the power of spirit came forward in this hour of crisis and surrounding gloom and made them enter the fold of Islam within half a century of their conquests. We have innumerable examples of individuals, families and tribes, even entire inhabitants of a city, embrancing Islam but there are only

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1. Sir H. H. Howarth, *History of the Mongols,* Vol. 1, p. 169.

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three or four instances when a whole people came to the threshold of Islam. Arabs were the first to accept Islam en masse. Afghans also got converted to Islam as a people (alas, they are in great difficulty today) and then the Tartars and Turks accepted Islam as a people. But it is a riddle of history—and I am myself astounded at it—that no historian has been able to bring to light the names of those persons who succeeded in converting a whole people to Islam. It was an event which had turned the course of history, but why do we not know who were those missionaries of Islam? What is the reason that these persons never allowed their names to be mentioned by anybody?

This reminds me of another incident recorded by history. When Madayn, the capital of Persia, was conquered, a Muslim soldier, found the crown of Chosroes. He hid it under his garment and brought it to S'ad bin Waqqas, the Commander of the Muslim army, as if he was stealthily taking away something very costly. Then, handing over the crown to his Commander, he said, "O Amir, it appears to be costly. I am giving it to you for being deposited in the treasury". The Commander stared open-mouthed at his infantryman for he was himself astounded to see the crown, studded with costly jewels. He was still more amazed to see that the poor man had brought it instead of keeping it with him. S'ad asked the name of the soldier but he turned his back and replied, "He knows my name for whose sake I have brought it here" And then he departed without caring to know the comment of his Commander.

This incident relates to one man only. But I believe that all those persons who got the Tartars accept the faith of Islam had acted in a similar manner. I was able to search out the names of only two persons, when I was writing something

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on the subject, after turning thousands of pages. One of these was the pure hearted Amir Tuzaun who occupied the office of Prime Ministership in the Court of a Tartar king of Iraq. Being a man of God he always tried to advise the king to take the path of virtue and goodness. His efforts bore fruit and the inhabitants of Baghdad saw one Friday that the King Ghazan and his courtiers were entering the mosque with rosaries in their hands.[1]

Another man was Shaikh Jamaluddin whose unfathomable sincerity, perfection of spirit and well-intentioned sympathy for the savage Tartars succeed in converting its Chaghtai branch, known as the middle Kingdom, ruling over Kashghar. Once the Shaikh was going somewhere. These were the days when the Tartars treated the Iranians as an inferior stock and lost no opportunity of humiliating them. Shaikh Jamaluddin unwittingly trespassed the game-preserve of the crown prince who was out for hunting that day. The Tartars were a superstitious folk who took ill of the trespass in the game-preserve. The Shaikh was immediately apprehended and produced before the Prince who was already wroth at the interference in his game by Shaikh Jamaluddin. He had his dog beside him. When he saw the Iranian Shaikh, he asked, "Are you better than this dog ?" The Shaikh remained cool and instead of showing temper quietly replied, "If I do not die with my faith intact, I would certainly be worse than the dog." Struck by the unexpected reply, the Prince asked further what the Shaikh meant by faith. The Shaikh explained how man's ultimate end in the hereafter depended on having a sound faith in God. Now we can think of the confidence and courage

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1. *Al-Bidayah wan-Nihayah*, Vol. XIII, p. 340.

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required for giving this answer to an autocrat prince. What a conviction the Shaikh had in the life after death and its dependence on having faith in God at the fag end of one's life. His sincerity of purpose and strength of conviction was not lost, for the Prince, who was to ascend the throne shortly, replied, "I cannot do anything now, but meet me when I have taken the sceptre in my hand " This story has been related by Persian historians and also included by Arnold in his *Preaching of Islam*.

Shaikh Jamaluddin now awaited Prince's coronation, but he died before the event came to pass. At his death-bed the Shaikh bade his son Rashid Uddin to complete the task left unfinished by him. He told his son to go to the Prince, after he had ascended the throne, and remind him of the promise made by him. Rashid Uddin did as he was bidden by his late father, but it was not easy to gain access to the King. He was not allowed to enter the royal palace, but he did not lose heart and remained waiting for the opportunity to complete the task left unfinished by his father. He took up residence under a tree by the side of the royal palace, performing prayers and giving call for it at the appointed hours. One day in early morning, he began to chant the call to prayers in his sonorous voice which disturbed the slumbring King. He ordered the guards to produce the man before him. This was the opportunity Rashid Uddin was seeking for a long time. In reply to the interrogation made by the King, Rashid Uddin referred to the conversation the King had had with his father. He told him that he had asked his father if the latter was better than a dog. He had then replied that it all depended on the question whether he died with faith in God. "Now, the matter has been decided," said Rashid Uddin, "for his father has actually

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died with full conviction and trust in his Lord."

The King recalled the conversation and called for his Prime Minister. Taking him into confidence, he told the story to the Prime Minister and said that he intended to embrace Islam. The Prime Minister replied that he had already accepted that faith but had kept it a secret. Other ministers were also summoned and they all agreed to follow the King in accepting the new faith.

The Tartars were rulers but they had hardly any religion or culture, arts or sciences worth the name. They accepted Islam and promulgated the law of Islam.

"Allah's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is ever Mighty, Wise."

(XLVIII : 57)

There is hardly any doubt that all this happened according to the pre-determined will of God Almighty. Tartars were simple-minded people who could not have run the administration of vast countries which were ahead of them in culture and civilization. They had, at the most, a code of criminal law whereas they needed men to run the administration, keep the canals flowing, organise revenue administration and the like. They were bound to take the help of Muslims who helped them to run the administration and thus impressed the superiority of Islamic cultural attainments on the minds of the new rulers. Thus it was only faith that remained to be borrowed by the Tartar rulers from their functionaries who were superior in every respect to them, and they ultimately succumbed to the charm of Islam.

Shortly after the acceptance of Islam by Tughluq Timur Khan in Iran, all the Tartar tribes in that country followed suit. The Tartars in Iraq had already embraced Islam through the

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efforts of Amir Tuzaun. The historians are on record that the way the Tartars accepted Islam in those days resembled falling of the beads of a broken rosary. It was all an accomplishment of the Muslim missionaries, scholars and pious men whose sincerity and perfection of spirit was beyond doubt. History bears witness to the fact that they worked ceaselessly behind the scene without anybody coming to know of their efforts untill they changed the course of events. Millions of Tartars who accepted Islam would be a witness to the greatest service rendered by these men of God when they will rise again on Day of Judgement.

The power of spirit possessed by these godly souls dedicated to their cause changed the leopard's spots. The tact is, as expressed by Prof Hitti,[1] "In the darkest hour of political Islam religious Islam has been able to achieve some of its brilliant victories." Another famous scholar, H.A R. Gibb, once said in his speech in the Oxford University that many a time Islamic culture was vehemently opposed by an alien culture but it was never subdued because Islamic mysticism or the thought of the sufis came to its rescue and gave it a power that could not be resisted.[2]

I have first spoken of a century which began with dreadful forebodings of death and destruction for Islam but the Muslim did not yield to despair. Of a fact, they had lost an empire, but not the heart. Empires can be lost ten times and won in the eleventh attempt, but the heart once lost can seldom be regained. The votaries of Islam continued their efforts silently without any fanfare. I do not know if they ever form-

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1. P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs,* p. 475
2. *Islamic Culture,* 1945, p. 265.

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ed any organisation or a society for the conversion of the Tartars, or publicised the benefits accruing from their acceptance of Islam, or the effects of the re-establishment of the ascendancy of Muslims. Nothing of this sort was done by them. Those who had engaged themselves in the task continued their efforts so silently that even the Muslims did not know what was happening. And, then, suddenly everyone was amazed to find that the entire Tartar nation had accepted their faith.

The illustration I have given here pertained to the seventh century of Islamic era, that is, the thirteenth Christain century whose beginning was so terrifying that it had scared the Muslims to death. God forbid, if they had also lost the covic-tion in their faith, there was every likelihood of their undergoing a cultural and intellectual apostasy even if they had not abjured their faith in Islam. But nothing of this kind took place; there was no cultural or inteliectual apostasy, much less the renunciation of Islam.

I will now bring another illustration of the tenth century (sixteenth century of the Christian era). I will not take you to any other country of the vast Islamic world, but refer to India which was then about to overthrow the ascendancy of Islam. Apparently it looked as if the die had been cast and the changeover was a matter of few days. You can go through the details of it in the books written about it.[1] The then world had two Muslim empires, one was that of the Ottoman Turks in Asia Minor and Middle East and the other was headed by the Moghuls in this sub-continent. Iran's Safawid Kingdom occupied the third place. The ruler of this country was young and

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1. See *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. III.

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energetic, intelligent and courageous who had won brilliant victorres. He happened to have among his courtiers a few talented scholars or rather master spirits of the age, among whom Faizi and Abul Fazl were in the forefront. They lent support to a movement designed to replace the grip of Islam over India by the *Din-i-Ilahi* of Akbar,[1] euphemistically given the name of "universal toleration", but really meant to positively prohibit essential Muslim rites.

This was a dangerous union of material power and intellectual acumen or rather a deep-laid conspiracy by an autocratic power in unison with latitudinarian thought to oust Islam. We rarely come across another example of this nature. It was then openly preached that the first millennium of Islamic era was to come to an end with the tenth century and a thousand years were more than enough for any religion. A number of Iranian and Indian scholars, lacking awe of God or having little knowledge of Islam, readily came forward with illustrations to show that several religions were replaced by another after a thousand years. They pleaded that the religion of the Arabs had completed its term and the followers of the Arabian Prophet now needed a new faith to pattern their lives according to the changed conditions. Such thoughts are very often a product of speculative thought which wants to rid itself of every moral obligation.

Now you can imagine the dangers involved at that time.

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1. The *Sulh Kul* of Akbar was not fair to Islam in as much as it discouraged Islamic beliefs and practices which were openly insulted in Akbar's court. Historians like Dr. Vincent Smith, W. H. Moreland and A. C. Chatterji have acknowledged the fact that the whole gist of Akbar's regulations was to further the adoption of Hindu, Jain and Parsi practices to the exclusion of Islamic tenets.

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The new movement had as its symbol the very man whose arms were invincible in India. He had emerged successful in every battle fought by him, had never come across any defeat or discomfiture. He was young and courageous, the descedant of a man so ambitious as Taimur and so strenuous as Baber. He was not only the Emperor of India but also one of the most intelligent and sagacious rulers who has left his mark on the pages of history.

What was the result? The closing decades of the tenth century foreshadowed the divestment of not merely Islamic political power in this country but also an end of its religious and spiritual supermacy. It also foreboded that the vacuum created by Islam's departure was to be filled in by other alien thoughts and powers. This revolution was to nullify the efforts of all those conquerors of the past who had won the land for Islam. It also meant invalidation of the labours of Khwaja Moin Uddin Chishti and his pure-hearted disciples who had, on the one hand, preached the message of love and humanity and social justice to the people and, one the other, provided moral and spiritual guidance to the rulers to run the country as conscientious, true-hearted and God-fearing servants of the country. This was not all, the revolution was threatening to destroy the entire educational system and intellectual fabric of the land which had been laboriously built up by these men of God.[1]

What happend next? A star rose not from the political or materialistic horizon but from the celestial skyline of faith and

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1. See Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami's *Tarikh Masha'ikh Chishti* and Syed Manzoor Ahsan Gilani's *Hindustan Men Musalmanon Ka Nizam-i-T'aleem.*

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spirituality which always comes to the aid of falling humanity, in the person of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid Alf Thani (971—1034 AH), who has been paid a tribute by Iqbal in these words.

He was the custodian of *Millat's* wealth in Ind,
Whom Allah had awakened at high time
Before Jahangir who refused to bend his neck,
His breath was a touch to the quick.

This mendicant sitting in his retreat resolves to fight to most gruesome conspiracy against Islam hatched by the high-browed intellectuals. He decides to raise his voice against the fetters placed on Islamic thought and way of life, and its right to live and prosper in this country.

The outcome of his efforts is known to you. When the eleventh century began, the atmosphere had undergone a change. The future of Islam was by then protected in this country for the next two or three centuries. He exposed the fallacies of neoplatonic spacious reasoning against the apostleship of Muhammad and the transcedence of *shariah* and *sunnah* and thereby restrengthened confidence in them.[1] The danger threatening to sweep Islam off its feet in India was averted. But, what was his strategy? No propaganda, no beating of the drums and no armed resistance to Akbar's power was planned by him. The Quranic wisdom had told him that he would be crushed in no time if he came forward as an adversary of the established power and would not get the opportunity of performing the task he had taken upon himself. He decided to entreat before God, to collect the most sincere and capable persons around him, to train and guide them in such a way that

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1. For details see *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*. Vol. III, fifth Chapter.

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they could not be purchased at any price, to teach them to disdain power and pelf and to touch the heart-strings of those who occupied highest positions in the court of Jahangir. He tried to make them realise that Islam was passing through a critical time in the country, its life and death was hanging in balance and that they ought to do something in an intellectual and constructive manner to save the situation.

Mujaddid started writing letters to those who were in authority. The list of his addressees is long enough but two of these notable persons who deserve to be mentioned here were Abdur Rahim Khan Khanan and Nawab Murtaza Khan alias Syed Farid. The result was that within a quarter of a century the whole atmosphere was changed. Indian Muslims came to intellectual forefront not only in this country but in the entire world of Islam. India came to occupy the central place in the pursuits pertaining to the perfection of spirit as well as in the intellectual field with erudite scholars of Arabic lexicography and Traditions, which were earlier regarded as a preserve of the Arabs, solely on account of that pure-hearted soul. It was because of him that India became a temple of learning and produced great scholars and researchers. This tradition of learning continued until a scholar of Shah Wali Ullah's (1114-1176 A. H.) stature was born in India who gave a new look to the science of dialectics, explained the essentials of caliphate and produced a blue-print of Islamic government as was never attempted before. He also tried to inject a new vigour and fresh blood in the decaying Muslim empire, for he had already foreseen the dangers of political and moral anarchy likely to overtake India after the downfall of Moghul empire.[1]

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1. See *Shah Waliullah Ke Siyasi Maktūbat*. By Prof. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami.

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The worthy sons of Shah Waliullah, among whom Shah Abdul Aziz was the most outstanding, popularised the education of Traditions and the Scripture as well as endeavoured to reform the morals and rituals of the people.

The *Jihad* movement of Syed Ahmad Shaheed (d. 1246 A. H.) and Maulana Muhammad Ismail (d. 1246 A. H.) was an extension of the same spirit of reform and regeneration. This great movement was so eminently successful in building up popular enthusiasm for virtuous living and perfection of spirit and morals that it caused the deeds performed in the earliest phase of Islamic history to be re-enacted in this subcontinent. It was, of a fact, such a great and comprehensive revivalist movement aiming at the transformation of the entire Muslim society of this part of the globe as had never been witnessed before in any land of the Islamic World.[1]

Thereafter came the turn of educational movements which resulted into establishment of the Darul Uloom Deoband, Madrasa Mazahiril Uloom, Shaharanpur, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow and numerous other institutions at several places for propagating the teachings of the *Kitab* and the *Sunnah*.[2] These institutions of religious education went a long way, as their founders had originally envisaged, in reforming the erroneous beliefs and customs of Indian Muslims and imparting a sense of Islamic identity to them. The products of these religious institutions had not only the privilege of contributing to the intellectual endeavours of Indian

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1. See *Saiyid Ahmad Shaheed* by Mohiuddin Ahmad and *Misunderstood Reformer* by S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi.
2. Details can be seen in the Author's another work entitled *Indian Muslims*.

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Muslims but also of participating in the struggle for the freedom of the country. It was because of them that unlike certain other Muslim countries, there never existed any cleavage between religion and politics nor the modern educated classes ever disowned the leadership of the religious scholars.

The endeavours of religious scholars of India made this country the centre of culture and learning. There was a time when students came from Yemen and Morocco to learn the science of Traditions to India. Similarly, one desirous of spiritual perfection normally took the road to India. Maulana Khalid Rumi was born in the northern area of Iraq and Syria, now forming part of Turkey; he got his education in the cities of Shahrzor and Damascus; yet, when he wanted to learn about the facts of mute reality for the perfection of his faith and spirit, he had to come to the hospice of Shah Ghulam Ali (d. 1240) at Delhi. With the training and guidance of the path of mysticism he got in this country, he was able to infuse a new life of virtue and spirituality in Iraq, Syria and Turkey whose marks are still visible in these lands.

I have been telling you about the reformatory and revivalist movements of India. Now I propose to speak about the great reformer of Arabia, Shaikh Abdul Wahhab (1115-1262), who was a contemporary of Shah Waliullah.[1] His movement was singularly successful owing to a variety of causes, political and historical, as has seldom been achieved by others. His movement gave birth to a school of thought which influenced a whole generation and the state in Arabia, in particular, and in

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1. Shah Waliullah was born in 1114 A. H. while Shaikh Abdul Wahhab was born in 1115 A. H. Maulana Masud Alam Nadwi's Urdu work Muhammad b. Abdul Wahhab can be seen for further details.

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other countries too, in general. At the same time Yemen had Allama Muhammad Ali b. Ali al-Shaukani (1172-1250 A.H.); in Asir these was Ahmad b. Abdullah b. Idris Hasani, the founder of Idrisiyah order; and Syed Muhammad b. Ali al-Sinnausi (1206-1276) was born in Libya.[1] All of them took up the task of reformation and propagation of Islamic teachings along with infusing the spirit of Jihad among their people. European orientalists normally dub all these reformers as the followers of Shaikh Abdul Wahhab; though unsuccessfully, since they cannot produce any evidence in support of their contention. Actually speaking, the Western scholars cannot appreciate the fact that the study of the Quran and the *Hadith* with sincerity of purpose can produce reformers in every age who would always be willing to fight the forces of vice and waywardness. And, this will continue to happen for ever. Now, to return to my theme, Syed Jamal Uddin Afghani (d. 1314/1897) came on the scene shortly thereafter to raise his voice for the unity of the Islamic world with such vigour and force that it caused a flutter in the hills and deserts of Egypt, .Syria and Turkey. His worthy disciple, Mufti Muhammad Abduh of Egypt (d. 1323/1905) played a memorable role in the intellectual awakening of the rising generation of Muslims in his

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1. The great fighter of freedom and noted reformer Sayyadi Ahmad As-Sharif was the grandson of Muhammad b. Ali al-Sinnausi. He relentlessly fought the Italians and gave pitched battles to them in Tripoli and Barqa. He fought the most developed nations of the West with his ill-equipped followers for full thirteen years. He was also a man of great spiritual perfection. He died in Medina in 1315/1933.

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time.[1]

The fourteenth century of Hijrah, viewed from the standpoint of Muslims, is a century of both success and defeat, mistakes committed and efforts made to make amends, naiveness of the Muslim peoples in being duped by the West as well as emerging political consciousness and freedom won by a number of Muslim countries. It is also a cenutry of several powerful Islamic movements. The variety and contradiction evinced in the events and happening of this century are not to be found in the previous centutries.

When this century opened its eyes it saw the glory of Ottoman Empire, providing the protection of Caliphate to the Islamic world, with Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II (1291-1327 A.H.)[2] as the reigning monarch. He was severely critised in the first half of twentieth century when Western writers went to the utmost length to besmirch him. However, the facts recently brought to light in several research articles published in Arabic and Turkish journals go to show that in spite of his certain weaknesses (which might have been due to his being a hereditary monarch or caused by the internal and external conspiracies against him), he was a courageous man and a zealous Muslim. European powers could not succeed in fragmentation of the Turkish empire and carving out a national home for the Jews in Palestine during his rule. He had dis-

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1. Owing to the recent trend of modern scholarship to criticise every public leader, Jamaluddin Afghani and Shaikh Mohammad Abduh do not enjoy the same esteem of the people as they did quarter of a century ago. But it cannot be denied that they played an important role in re-establishing confidence in Islam's rationality. For details see the authors *Western Civilization—Islam and Muslims*
2. A. D. 1876-1909

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dainfully rejected the offers of the Jewish deputation, saying, "Baitul-Muqaddas is much too precious; I am not prepared to give you even a lump of Palestine's dust."[1] He had inspired a new zeal, given a new life to the Caliphate and created the urge for unity of the Islamic World.

Ottoman Empire was the custodian of the holy places and honoured with the mantle of Islamic Caliphate. With all its internal weaknesses and external conspiracies to dismember its possessions, it was a citadel of power and protection to the Arab world. Had it been there the lands of the Arabs could not have been apportioned like an evacuee property. In the beginning of this century the Ottoman empire extended from Yemen and Asir in the east to Albania in the west and included Tripoli, Tunisia and Fazzan in the Africa. Its southern limits encompassed Aswan, Egypt and Barqa, while all the lands of Bulgaria, Balkan, Trabzun and Idrianople in the north were within its northern limits. The Ottoman Empire held a major portion of Asia Minor and Syria including present Palestine, Lebanon and Transjordan, Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Cyprus. This sick man of Europe was a terror to the West.

Alas, the Muslims could not appreciate this blessing of God given to them in the shape of a vast empire. Dethronement of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan in 1909 was by no means a tragic event of such proportions that Islamic history should have changed its course. His deposition might have been brought about by the conspiracies against him, but Sultan Rishad, Sultan Wahid Uddin Khan and Sultan Abdul Majid Khan ascended the throne, one after another, after Sultan Abdul

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1. This was conveyed to me by Mufti Syed Amin al-Husaini whose veracity is irreproachable.

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Hamid Khan. But a greater calamity was yet to follow these happenings which brought adversity, shame and humiliation to the entire Islamic world and resulted in the loss of Jerusalam. It was this unfortunate event which, according to Maulana Shibli, gave an opportunity to the enemies of Islam to cast their covetous eyes even at the holy mosques of Mecca and Medina. It was this happening which turned the Arab lands of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and northern portion of Africa into protectorates of the Western powers—perhaps the Arabs are still serving the term of punishment for that—and it consisted of the action taken by the Arabs during the First World War. Duped by the Christian minorities of their own lands who raised the cry of Arab nationalism, the Arabs were taken in by the false promises made by the Allied Powers. They took up arms the against the Turks on 10th June 1916 with the result that Syria and Palestine were lost by the Turks in 1917, Egypt became a dependency of the British who also occupied Jerusalem on the 9th December 1917. On the 1st October 1918, Sharif Husain's son Amir Faisal and General Alenby entered Damascus triumphantly, but the French General Guru kicked the grave of Sultan Salah Uddin, saying "Salah Uddin, we are here now, we have conquered Syria. How long would you sleep?" By October 1918 all the Arab lands of Hijaz, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq had passed from the hands of Turkey to the Allies.

The entire world of Islam felt disturbed by this state of affairs but the Indian Muslims were more agitated. They also gave expression to their seething discontent in a powerful manner. This was the time when the great Khilafat movement launched under the leadership of Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal, Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan of

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Deoband, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan shook the whole of India. The subconscious impulses of Indian Muslims and their lofty idealism charged them with a seething emotion which grew to such intensity that it burst out like a volcano against the Western domination. It awakened the spirit of India and created a hatred for everythting connected with the West. Mahatma Gandhi actively cooperated with this movement and toured the country with the Khilafat leaders to revive the morale and self-confidence of the Indian Muslims.

But, the declaration terminating the Caliphate made by Mustafa Kamal on the 3rd March 1924 came as a bolt from the blue so far as the Indian Muslims were concerned, Iqbal said on that occassion :

Simpleton Turk tore apart the Khilafat mantle;
How naive is Muslim and see the enemies' wangle !

The times I am referring to was as depressing and gloomy as the first half of the seventh century when the savage Tartars were destroying the Muslim Kingdoms and their centres of culture and civilization. But it was only an onslaught of a barbarous people and the debacle had come along because of the inability of ease-loving Muslims to withstand their charge. The Tartars had nothing to offer by way of intellectual thought or culture. The offensive launched by the Western powers during the first half of the fourteenth century of Hijrah or the twentieth of Christian era was entirely different. The enemy was now armed with a new philosophy of life, had a new system of education, had brought a new set of values based on rejection of God and was the propagator of a new religion of materialism.

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Then came the Bolshevik revolution in March 1917 as if to give finishing touches to the Western depredations. This revolution was not only to change the political scene by cutting across the history and geography of the world, nor was it confined to economic or political thought, but it also endeavoured to pull down all the accepted principles of creed and morals. It laid a claim to raise a new edifice by demolishing the existing pattern of life and human consciousness Naturally, Islam was to suffer most from it because it believed in a set of unalterable values which required a positive faith in the ultimate reality. Unfortunately, there were few among the Muslims who could sense the danger or could do anything to contend with it. They perhaps lacked the "wisdom of faith" that had always warned them of even lesser dangers on earlier occassions. In the western part of the Islamic world the ex-Defence Minister of Turkey, Envar Pasha (1881-1992) was the first to perceive the danger He organised the people of Turkistan and fought a number of battles against the Bolsheviks during 1921 and 1922. On the 4th August 1922, he attacked the Russians near Kochgin village; the enemy was over-whelmingly large in size; and Envar Pasha fell fighting valiantly on Friday, the seventh of Zil Hijja, 1340 A. H.

The Bolshevik revolution extended its sway over all the Muslim lands in Central Asia including the Chinese and Russian Turkistan and laid open its population not only to cultural and intellectual apostasy but also endeavoured to make the Muslims under its domination renounce their faith. The history of Spain of the nineth century was re-enacted. This danger confronts not only this sub-continent, but it has cast its shadows on the entire Islamic world and forced it to take the position of a friend or foe to its power. Certain Arab

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countries started not only importing its manufactured goods and armaments but also its ideology and philosophy and became its trusted votaries. Very recently it has trampled down Afghanistan which had been a reservior of Islamic zeal and valour and had supplied India with able administrators, scholars and godly saints in the bygone ages Afghanistan had also been the outer line of defence against onslaughts on India which has thus been laid open to a grave danger looming large at its doorsteps.

But, in the darkness that had engulfed the Islamic world by the middle of the fourteenth century, a ray of new hope, a silver lining of new awakening also became visible. Iqbal has truly said :

Fresh blood was flushed in the dead limb of East,
It is a secret incomprehensible to Avicina and Alfarabi :
Muslims discovered themselves by the tempest of the West,
The circling waves of water bring out the precious pearl

There were positive signs of political awakening all over the world of Islam and standards of freedom against alien domination were raised which caused Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco to win their independence. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan came into existence. Indian Muslims also took part in the struggle for freedom of their country and made sacrifices for it. Now there are 45 independent Muslim countries of which 24 are members of the United Nations and their flags flutter proudly on its headquarter. Muslims now carry a weight in the international affairs but were they to unite, they could have stopped several injustices and helped the poor and weak nations of the world. If God were to bless these countries with sincere and deephearted leadership, they could have enforced Islamic laws within their coun-

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tries and reformed their societies acccording to the precepts of Islam. They could have indeed created the ideal spiritual-moral society—now seen in the pages of history only—which has been forgotten by others and the Muslims alike. Such a social order can show a new path to the humanity, bring about real understanding between the Eastern and Western Blocks and pave the way for propagation of Islam If these leaders can realise their own politicali mportance and also use it in a wise and effective way, they can save the humanity from destruction towards which it is heading. The leaders of Indian Muslims can also serve their community through their own unity and sincerity of purpose and provide a morally conscious leadership to the country. They can thus save their country from intellectual and moral anarchy which is now assuming gignatic proportions.

On the other hand, this century gave birth to several reformist and revolutionary movements in the Islamic world. Some of these were sufficiently powerful and comprehensive; there have never been such strong movements in the bygone centuries. Another hopeful aspect of these movements is that they are capable of influencing the educated and intellectual classes among the Muslims for they can satisfy and create a new confidence in Islam, They provide an intellectual base and transcend the limits of geographical boundaries. It is also noteworthy that the educated class associated with these movements is very often found to be more eager of restoring the fundamental bases of Islam than even the religious-minded people. The Al-Ikhwan of Egypt, Nuri movement of Turkey, Hizb ut-Tahrir of Jordan and Palestine, Majsumi party of Indonesia and the Tablighi Jamat and Tahrik Islami of the Indian sub-Continent are some of the movements that can he cited in

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this connexion. One may differ with one or all these movements but nobody can deny their popularity and effectiveness. Apart from these organisations, the spirit of revivalism seen in the present-day Islamic world owes its existence, to a large extent, to the powerful and elegant verses of Iqbal which are also without a parallel in the Islamic literature of previous centuries.

The fifteenth century has now spread its wings. Had the Islamic world been deprived of the great treasurers of faith and thought, political influence and material wealth, independent states and powerful movements and also its great manpower, there was nothing to make one despair of God's mercy for the Muslims still possess the Divine Scripture and His enternal message in the shape of Islam. These two are still capable of working miracles and giving a new life to even listless people.

But, the Muslims happen to be the only refuge for the suppressed humanity since they are the custodians of the last message of God. Perhaps, this century would bring a turning point when the whole of mankind would realise the worth and importance of Islam. There is thus no cause to be despaired of the mercy of God. Humanity has reached the lowest ebb of its degradation when it would attract Divine compassion for a major change in the existing state of affairs.

The Western civilization is doomed. It has become rotten to the core, and if it is still surviving it is not at all due to its latent qualities of strength and endurance but because no other civilization is at present ready to take its place. The other civilizations in the world are, at the utmost, its own hazy carbon copies or third class caricatures or they are so weak and decrepit that it is beyond their power and ability to stand

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against it, face to face. Now, if a Muslim country or the World of Islam, as a whole, can muster enough strength and competence to fill the void that is going to be created by the fall of Western civilization it can re-establish its claim to the leadership of mankind which, according to the unchanging practice of the Lord, always goes to those who are earnest, deephearted and resolute. The Muslim, therefore, ought to decide whether it is more honourable to approach the West with a begging bowl or assume the exalted position of stewardship and guidance of humanity more than which there is no greater glory in the world after Apostleship. Does the sacrifice of worldly renown, power and wealth count for anything before it ? Even if a man possessed a hundred lives and had to lay down all of them for the sake of it, the bargain would not be bad.[1]

I would now conclude this brief survey of the past with the call given to you by the poet of the East.

O Builder of Haram, rise to re-construct the world anew,
Awake out of your deep slumber, and rise again.

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1. This paragraph has been taken from the authors *Western Civilization—Islam and Muslims*, pp. 214-15.

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A Ten Point Programme for the Islamic World during the Fifteenth Century

The events and causes of Islamic renaissance stated earlier lead us to the conclusion that the Muslim society requires, in every age, such vigilant, high-reaching, truthful and godly souls who can heal the spirits, create a living awareness of God and bring about moral regeneration of the people even in the most trying and adverse circumstances. At a time when the Muslim states are degenerating, the masses are being swept away by materialistic urges and worldly desires, and a mad race for 'get-rich-quickly' has caught the imagination of the people, it becomes all the more necessary that virtuous and godly among them should give the message of hope to the despondent, strengthen their faith in God—His all embracing love as well as His awe—and make them realise the values of contentment and reliance on God. They should teach the people to raise themselves above their petty interests, to disdain wealth and power and to hate time-serving attitude that can stoop to sell the countries and nations for petty personal gains. They should be able to promote the urge for making sacrifices for the sake of faith and laying down one's life in the way of God. They can, in this manner, usher the people groping in the darkness of hopelessness to the light of God's message of hope and divine succour and cause the degenerate and decaying society to bring up men who are honest and courageous, are able to shoulder

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the heaviest responsibility and can solve the intricate problems facing the Muslim society as well as protect Islam and its interests. Such virtuous and god souled persons perform the same function in their own societies as Khwaja Hasan Basri had done during the reign of the Umayyads and Hafiz Ibn al-Jauzi, Imam Ghazzali and Saiyadna Abdul Qadir had performed during the times of the Abbasids.

The presence of such pious and righteous men of God is a must for the Muslim society in every time and clime for they can succeed even where the states and administrations fail to face the challenge of time and ultimately die and dwindle away. The absence of such righteous persons constitutes the greatest danger for any Muslim society. In some of the Islamic and Arab countries, at present rolling in wealth, one finds this spiritual void which cannot be filled by their vast organisations and educational institutions nor yet by their ambitious programmes for missionary activities and other projects for serving the cause of Islam.

Islamic revivalist and missionary movements are now-a-days active in different parts of the world. Their techniques and methods differ according to their peculiar needs and circumstances, and some of them are undoubtedly doing a service to Islam, but it seems necessary to indicate certain points and the lines on which the endeavour in this field should be made so that not only the present decay in the Muslim society is arrested but a vigorous and comprehensive movement for Islamic renaissance may also emerge in the near future. May be that these hints are found helpful by the organisations and individuals who are committed to uphold the cause of Islam.

1. The faith of the Muslim masses, which, in any case, still exists, though in a subdued form, has to be strengthened

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and their religious consciousness aroused to make it a living and dynamic force. The emotional attachment of the Muslims to Islam is the greatest hurdle in the way of many a so-called leadership of Muslim countries to openly take the path of *kufr* and apostasy or to invite their people to take that course. Despite all the conspiracies hatched within or outside these Muslim countries to oust Islam from these lands, the existence of Islamic consciousness in the masses, even in a weaker form, or in a minority amongst them, discourages these leaders to act on their nefarious plans. God forbid, if this consciousness were to perish and the Muslims were to lose their spiritual and emotional attachment to Islam, no guarantee and no promise to administer these lands as Muslims would stand in the way of these leaders to turn their countries into another Spain or Turkistan. The masses of any co ntry constitute its real wealth; they are like a fertile land on which one can either plant a grove or construct a palatial building. They are really the raw materials from which every kind of human prototype can be moulded. The masses of the Muslim countries, notwithstanding their faults and failings, have been the object of the labour of love on the part of many a prophet and man of God. They still excel all other nations and religious groups in their purity of heart, sincerity of purpose, warmth of feelings, selflessness and readiness to make sacrifices for a just cause.

At the same time the Muslims have to be helped in inculcating those qualities which entitle a people to overcome all difficulties with the help of God, no matter how insurmountable the hardships are or however hard the struggle has to be made by them. These qualities are an implicit faith in God, without the least mixture of *shirk* in it, and Islamic character of

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the individuals and the society, as a whole, both of which should have forsaken all vestiges of un-Islamic customs and usages and developed a distaste for copying others in any walk of life. This can, however, be actualised only by eliminating the element of hypocrisy and duplicity which have unfortunately found a way into our society. Both of these are against the teachings of Islam and militate against the character of a truly Islamic society. Similarly every effort has to be made to protect the Muslim society against amoral habits and evil practices, gratification of carnal desires and the demoralising effects of wealth and power which had aforetime invited the wrath of God and caused the downfall of several peoples of the earlier prophets. The Muslims have also to be protected against the moral depravity of the West which has made the European nations dissolute and overindulgent. Now the West wants the whole of the East, specially the Muslim countries, to become intemperate and licentious like it.

However, the entire reformatory endeavour will be unrewarding unless a truly Islamic consciousness is created among the Muslims and they are provided with correct intellectual guidance. The need of the hour is that they learn to discriminate between their friends and foes and become conscious of their problems as well as realities of the situation. Their understanding of the problems and deeper religious sense should be so developed that they may not be duped by interested politicians with ulterior motives nor any slogan mongering or a false promise may be able to mislead them. There should be no recurrence of the tragic events which were recently brought about by machinations of the foreign powers and selfish politicions by fanning the national, linguistic and cultural chauvinism of an intensely religious section of the

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Muslims[1]. All this was made possible owing to the immature understanding and simplicity of those people.

2. Spiritual realities and concepts emanating from Quranic expressions and the true features of faith as well as the comprehension of religion have to be protected against all distortions and deviations. Any effort to make these sub-serve or to prove them as compatible with the ever-changing modern political and economic concepts and systems of the West, which are also extremist in their make-up, or to interpret Islam in terms of any political philosophy, or even to treat it as a view of life on a par with other modern philosophical and political systems ought to be scruplously avoided. The political philosophies and their systems of government represent a changing, developing phenomenon while the religious realities and the faith in them are abiding; they form the central point round which revolves the entire religious life of the people. These realities constitute the beginning as well the end of moral-spiritual teachings of all the earlier prophets of God who, from time to time, invited their people to receive these truths. Their struggles and endeavours were for reposing trust in these abiding realities. Thus, everything not based on the concept of life after death, or which weakens the desire to attain propinquity to God, or yet enfeebles the spirit of faith and action to win the pleasure of God ought to be avoided. Every concept, approach and methodology employed for exposition of knowledge and cultivation of education promoting the idolatrous thoughts and ideas of the pagan past, which are still

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1. See *Calamity of Cultural and Linguistic Chauvinism*, by the author brought out by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow.

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alive and thriving,[1] and are likely to decrease one's aversion to *shirk* and its manifestations, such as, extolling monuments of the Age of Ignorance are extremely dangerous. Iqbal was correct in asserting that :

"The believer is aging but still young are the Lat and Manat."

3. The spiritual and emotional attachment of the Muslims to the blessed Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) has to be maintained at all costs. Effort should be directed to make the holy Prophet dearer to every Muslim than his own self and the nearest of his kin for this is the criterion of true faith according to the undisputed *ahāoīth* The tender feeling for the last Prophet of God with complete assurance in his being the most perfect and infallible teacher of humanity should be inculcated and everything that decreases the love and regard for him or stands in the way of following in his footsteps should be rejected. Actually speaking the love and regard for the holy Prophet has been the only binding force that has kept the non-Arab Muslims aligned to Islam and saved them from losing their identities in their respective non-Islamic cultures and nationalities.

The point has a still greater significance for the Arab countries where nationalist movements, promoted by the literary creations of the Jew and Christian writers and certain protagonists of modern Arabic literature lacking the ardency for the holy Prophet, have weakened this attachment of the people to the Prophet of Islam to such an extent that one feels the need for a fresh Islamic literature in Arabic in order to revive the dormant faith and to rekindle the flame of love for the Prophet in the

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1. See *Islamic Concept of Prophethood*, by the author.

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hearts of the people. The situation obtaining in this regard in some of these countries has made a non-Arab poet enamoured by the holy Prophet to say :

"From the land of love, I bring a new contingent ;
For the *Haram* is in danger from the revolt of intellect."

4. The intellectual and political leadership of the Muslims is in the hands of modern educated class among them which also controls the press and publicity media. This class has, either owing to the educational system borrowed from the West or because of its mistaken values and judgements, lost its confidence in Islam's capacity to solve every problem and to provide guidance to the humanity on the right path. This class has erroneously assumed that Islam has lost its vigour and capacity to solve the problems of the modern age. The convinction that Islam is the abiding message of God, transcanding all barriers of time and space, and is capable of saving the humanity, like the Ark of Noah, from drowning in the sea of its own follies, has to be re-installed in the hearts of this class of persons.

The loss of confidence in Islam by this elite among the Muslim, or its weakened faith in Islam's potentialities, is the real cause why it so often opts for un-Islamic measures or wants to reform Islam itself even if it amounts to intellectual and cultural repudiation of the faith. This calamity has now assumed such alarming proportions that almost the entire world of Islam is passing through a widening chasm between the masses and their rulers, without any prospect of bridging this gap in the near future. This duality of feelings and interests between the two classes has given rise to an intense emotional, intellectual and cultural conflict between them which oftentimes erupts in the shape of military take-overs of the adminis-

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tration or revolts and insurrections against the ruling junta in these countries.

5. The curriculum and the system of education in the Muslim countries need a fundamental change; a reshaping of the concept and approach to education, so that it becomes compatible with the values and judgements of Islam. The system of education should never be imported from a foreign land nor can it be borrowed from an alien school of thought. It can only be formulated through deep study and correct comprehension of Islam and its details can be worked out by Muslim scholars and educationists themselves who need not pay heed to the artificial distinctions of the old and the new or the eastern and the western systems of education. This is, in fact, the most pressing need of the time which cannot brook the least delay. Unless this important task is undertaken the Muslim countries can neither regain their self-confidence nor can they think out the solutions of the problems facing them. It would be no exaggeration to claim that without meeting this imperative need the Muslims would not be able to administer their own countries according to their genius, nor their educational institutions, press and other means of publicity would be able to discharge their functions in accordance with the teachings of Islam or to meet the peculiar needs of their people.

6. It is also necessary to build up a strong and world-wide movement for the study and research in Islamic literature so as to create a rapport between literary creations of the earlier Muslim savants and the rising generation. In this way alone the Islamic branches of learning can be revitalised and the claim of Islamic jurisprudence to be an expanding and

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1. See *Islamic Concept of Prophethood* by the author.

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progressive legal system can be demonstrated. Based on everlasting principles which never get antiquated, the Islamic legal system has the capacity of development with the changing times. There is, thus, no need to take recourse to the man-made laws in its presence. The step suggested here would really amount to a revivalist endeavour for Islam since it will meet an urgent requirement of all the Muslim countries and communities and save them from the danger of intellectual and cultural waywardness, or rather dam the flood of westernisation threatening to inundate the whole of the Muslim world.[1]

7. Islamic culture is drawn from the norms and values upheld by Islam; its concept of purity and cleanliness; moderate, upright and just behaviour demanded by it; the Quranic teachings and the way of life practised by the holy Prophet; in short, it actualises in totality the teachings of Islam which were given a practical shape by the earliest adherents of Islam. We must take every possible step to make the Islamic culture a distinguishing feature of every Muslim society in every country. The dichotomy of accepting only the faith and ritual observances and rejecting the culture brought forth by that religion's comprehensive, flexible and liberal norms of values in favour of an alien culture or civilization is nothing short of opening the gates of intellectual and cultural apostasy. There are, in fact, Muslim countries which have so completely modernised themselves under the impact of the West that their entire public and private life—from private houses and mode of living to hotels and public offices—has undergone a complete change. Save for a few religious observances one

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1. For details *see* the author's *Western Civilization—Islam and Muslims.*

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can find no trace of their national identity and may sometimes find it hard to believe that one is not in a western but a Muslim country. Cultural identity of the Muslim societies is an essential factor for maintaining their rapport with the religion they profess; for, the life of individuals and socio cultural norms and institutions go to make a complete whole. It is thus absolutely necessary that the Islamic culture and its way of life should reassert themselves in these countries

8. The world of Islam needs today an intellectual leadership which can face the challenge of the West with courage, confidence and creative thinking and can chart out a new way in the midst of different norms and concepts of western civilization—it should be a way that is neither imitative nor extremist. The new leadership has to rise above the non-essential collaterals and shallowness of the West. It has to pay attention to the intrinsic truths and to treat the western knowledge and learning simply as raw materials for recasting and remoulding a new cultural pattern consistent with the ideas, beliefs, philosophies, dogmas and doctrines of Islam. This would be a revolutionary achievement in the real sense since the Islamic world cannot attain complete independence in its absence.[1]

9. The governments of Muslim majority countries which are waging a war of attrition against their own Islam-loving section of the population are virtually engaged in a religious genocide. The leaders of these countries who have come to hold the reins of government either through a conspiracy or a military take over are frittering away their energy and resources aimlessly. Similarly, the rulers of certain Arab countries want

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1. See *Western Civilization—Islam and Muslims* by the author.

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to change the religious precepts and the rules of *Sharia* in such a manner that they become helpful in achieving their own political ends, or help them to cover their own personal weaknesses, or else become instrumental in implementing programmes instigated by foreign powers inimical to Islam. It is necessary to make these leaders realise the futility of their efforts which have not only miserably failed in many a Muslim country but have also proved a hindrance in the achievement of national unity. The attention of these leaders should be invited to the ends and methods which would really help them in making their countries strong and united.

The leaders of other Muslim countries who have a reverential regard for Islam should, in a like manner, be persuaded to create conditions favourable to the introduction of Islamic *Sharia*. They have to be convinced that their endeavour in this direction would attract the succour and blessings of God for their countries and the people.

Simultaneously an all out effort should be made to re establish a central leadership for the entire Islamic world. This Central leadership should be based on the principles of mutual consultation and cooperation in goodness and God-fearing. There should be a general feeling of remorse and sorrow over the abolition of the Caliphate which was made incumbent for the Muslims and whose asbence has been the main cause of a series of calamities suffered by them.

10. In so far as the non-Muslim countries without Muslim minority communities are concerned, the message of Islam should be disseminated in an effective and rational manner, keeping in view the existing conditions and the psychology of each nation to which the preaching is addressed. The present state of materialistic nihilism has created a spiritual

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and moral void in most of these countries which, along with the explicit failure of modern civilization, has created bright prospects for galvanizing man to the message of One God and unity of mankind preached by Islam.

In those countries where Muslims exist as a minority community, the Muslims should devise ways and means to impart religious education to their children without taking recourse to any assistance from their national governments and should also safeguard their personal laws. The Muslims in these countries ought to be ever watchful of the new rules and laws promulgated in their countries, exhibit their trustworthiness, dignity and noble-mindedness and try to fill the void of moral leadership for they are best fitted to do so. They can in this way not only afford a proof of their usefulness for their countries but can also become the saviours of the morally decadent societies in such countries. This is the only way to gain love and respect for themselves as well as to enhance the regard and confidence of their countrymen which has been lost by the Muslims owing to peculiar historical circumstances in the recent past.

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At the outset of this new century of Islamic era the history or rather the whole of human race is looking forward to those masterminds who can not only satisfy the needs of Islam but can also meet the requirements of the present age by changing the course of history through their initiative and courageous action. The scribe of time is holding its breath with the unrolled scroll of history in its hand to pay its homage and record the brilliant achievements of such leaders of mankind.

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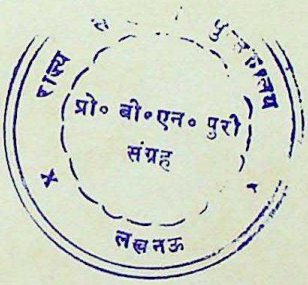

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